United Nations E/CN.6/2012/NGO/26

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
30 November 2011

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-sixth session
27 February-9 March 2012
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern, and further actions and initiatives; priority theme: "The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges"

Statement submitted by United States Federation for Middle East Peace, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2012/1.

11-61425 (E) 151211

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Statement

Rural women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations

Bearing in mind that the priority theme of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women is "The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges", the United States Federation for Middle East Peace has submitted the following statement to the Commission.

The United States Federation for Middle East Peace advocates the empowerment of women and believes that the valuable role that rural women and girls play in the economic survival of their families must not be undermined. They are an indispensable element of improving food security in their communities and their nations. Many rural women and girls are already living in poverty, and when war befalls their homelands they face double the burden and setbacks. These women and girls have the potential to contribute to the creation of sustainable development, and their voices must be heard and their needs addressed.

The Federation stresses that the gender gap must be closed when it comes to agriculture. Solidarity must be achieved through ongoing dialogue between Governments, civil society and indigenous communities to forge a relationship at all levels of the decision-making process. The international community must take into account the inequalities that rural women and girls face daily, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations. At the national level, countries should ensure that laws are enacted and implemented for the full enjoyment of all human rights by women in full equality, which is a fundamental objective set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In this context, we recommend the following:

1. Address the protection needs of all women and girls who are subjected to gender-based violence by emphasizing the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), particularly in areas that are experiencing the "Arab awakening".

2. Reaffirm the involvement of women and girls in rural areas in the Middle East, during and after conflict, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1820 (2008), thus creating a new culture that ensures gender, ethnic and intergenerational equality, with a focus on the right of women to own land and to have access to resources.

3. Ensure that education and training are accessible to indigenous women and girls. Having continuing access to resources will enable them to expand their knowledge base, thus minimizing dependency.

The world must see the correlation between granting equality to women and girls as a tool for eradicating poverty and creating a peaceful and sustainable world.